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CLAIMS

1   1.   A method for managing at least one storage device, comprising the steps of:

2   (a) identifying the one storage device;

3   (b) establishing a database containing information about the identified device;

4   (c) providing to the user a graphical user interface in accordance with the information in

5   the database, the graphical interface displaying at least one menu option for the identified device

6   for selection by the user to request at least one of (i) display of information and (ii) execution of

7   at least one process to control the operation of the one storage device;

8   (d) processing the selected menu option; and

9   (e) automatically updating the graphical user interface in response to the processing of the

10   selected menu option.

1   2.   The method according to claim 1 wherein the step of identifying the one storage

2   device comprises the step of ascertaining a manufacturer and model number for the one storage

3   device.

1   3.   The method according to claim 1 wherein the step of establishing a database

2   comprises the step of obtaining information that includes at least one of (a) operational rules, (b)

3   commands and (c) processing routines of the one storage device.

1   4.   The method according to claim 3 wherein the processing step includes

2   determining if the requested execution of the at least one process complies with the

3   operational rules for the identified device, and if not,

4   blocking execution of the at least one process; and

5   generating an error message.

1   5.   The method according to claim 1 wherein the step of providing a graphical user

2   interface includes the steps of:

3   displaying icons representative of each identified devices in a hierarchical fashion in a

4   first pane; and

5   displaying information in a second pane related a corresponding one of the icons

6   displayed in a first pane.

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1   6.   The method according to claim 1 wherein steps (d) and (e) are repeated following

2   receipt of each subsequent menu selection made by a user.

1   7.   Apparatus for managing at least one storage device, comprising:

2   a database containing information about potential storage devices; and

3   a processor coupled to at least one storage device for (a) identifying the one storage

4   device; (b) providing to a user a graphical user interface in accordance with the information in

5   the database, the graphical interface displaying at least one menu option for the identified device

6   for selection by the user to request at least one of (i) display of information and (ii) execution of

7   at least one process to control the operation of the one storage device; (d) processing the selected

8   menu option; and (e) automatically updating the graphical user interface in response to the

9   processing of the selected menu option.

1   8.   The apparatus according to claim 7 wherein the processor identifies the one

2   storage device by ascertaining its manufacturer and model number.

1   9.   The apparatus according to claim 7 database contains information that includes at

2   least one of (a) operational rules, (b) commands and (c) processing routines of the one storage

3   device.

1   10.   The apparatus according to claim 7 wherein the processor process the selected

2   menu option by (a) determining if the requested execution of the at least one process complies

3   with the operational rules for the identified device, and if not, (b) blocking execution of the at

4   least one process; and (c) generating an error message.

1   11.   The apparatus according to claim 7 wherein the processor provides the graphical

2   user interface by (a) displaying icons representative of each identified devices in a hierarchical

3   fashion in a first pane; and (b) displaying information in a second pane related a corresponding

4   one of the icons displayed in a first pane.